



North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation

*A Publication Sponsored by Elisha Mitchell Chapter, National Audubon Society*

Michael F. Easley  
Governor

August 2003

Volume 17 Number 8

William G. Ross Jr.  
Secretary, DENR

## GUARDING RESOURCES PART OF JOB

The bright yellow, olive and black bird that Ranger Chris Helms held between his fingers was not a stranger.

Though Kentucky warblers are most common in states that border the Mississippi River, and though the bird is considered secretive and is normally hidden in groundcover, Helms recognized the bird by the band around its leg. This was the same Kentucky warbler Helms had banded two springs ago at Weymouth Woods Sandhills Nature Preserve.

"We wouldn't have even known they were at Weymouth Woods had we not been doing the banding," he said.

Every spring and fall since 2001, park staff and volunteers have set up mist nets along a wetter area of the forest and banded birds caught in early morning. Some birds are recaptured year after year, and other finds are more surprising, such as the Kentucky warbler.

Helms is also involved in a study at nearby Fort Bragg that compares birds found in areas where prescribed burning has helped preserve the natural state of vegetation with birds found in areas where fires have been suppressed. The information gleaned from these studies helps determine how beneficial prescribed burns are to wildlife. Coupled with the ongoing inventories of birds at Weymouth Woods, the findings shape perceptions about the proper timing of burnings.

"It's definitely something we can look at and study and see how it would affect our resource



*KENTUCKY WARBLER FOUND AT WEYMOUTH WOODS.*  
management plans," Helms said.

The bird banding is just one of many studies conducted in state parks that potentially can influence the way parklands are managed. Those studies and other management efforts are catalogued in a resource management annual report that was completed in July.

"Management of parks is a skill required of our rangers and field staff that is often overlooked by the public," said Carol Tingley, chief of the NC Division of Parks and Recreation's planning and natural resources section. "Much of the time, people don't realize this research is going on."

Last year, rangers and division staff conducted a variety of studies and inventories in state parks, documenting the diversity of rare plants and animals. Among the projects was the discovery of four rare animals, including the eastern coral snake, and 15 rare plants at Carolina Beach State Park. Also, a population of the state-threatened

**WWW.NCSPARKS.NET**  
**FOR STATE PARKS INFO AND EVENTS**

*CONTINUED ON PAGE 4*

**Department of Environment and Natural Resources**

# UP CLOSE AND 'PERSONNEL'

**Thomas Satterwhite** was hired as a General Utility Worker at Crowders Mountain State Park. He has more than eight years of related work experience and has completed course work at Western Piedmont Community College.

**Robert Cook** was hired as a General Utility Worker at Eno River State Park. He has worked as a seasonal ranger at the park and has more than five years of related work experience.

**Andrew Chilton** was hired as a Park Ranger II at Falls

Lake State Recreation Area. He has a bachelor's degree in parks, recreation and tourism from North Carolina State University and has more than four years of experience at state parks, including working as a seasonal ranger at William B. Umstead and Pilot Mountain state parks.

**JoAnne Clendening** was hired as Office Assistant III at William B. Umstead State Park. She received an executive secretary certification from the Chandler School for Women in Massachusetts. She worked with the di-

vision from 1988-2001 as an Office Assistant and as the division's Volunteer Training Coordinator.

**Sherry Boncek** was hired as Office Assistant III at Medoc Mountain State Park. Boncek has more than 14 years of related work experience including work at Time Warner Cable for 10 years.

**Michael Padgett** was hired as a Maintenance Mechanic II at Hammocks Beach State Park. Padgett is a veteran of the US Marine Corps and has more than six years of related experience, including carpentry, electric, plumbing and mechanic work experience.

**Benjamin Veasey** was hired as a Park Ranger II at Singletary Lake State Park. He has a bachelor's degree in criminology/biology from North Carolina State University. He is also certified in Advanced Open-Water SCUBA. He has one year of work experience at Falls Lake State Recreation Area.

## LEDFORD HONORED

Lewis Ledford, the division superintendent of state parks, was honored in May by the Mitchell County Chamber of Commerce as one of its "top 10" citizens who have made a difference in the community.

Ledford is a native of the Glen Ayre community, a graduate of Bowman High School and Appalachian State University. He became the sixth state parks superintendent in November 2000 and the first to rise to the job from entry-level ranger.

Ledford's community volunteer efforts have earned him the Governor's Award, and he was recently honored by the American Red Cross for his 12 years of service.

## From The Director's Desk

Dear fellow employees:

In the area of protecting our natural resources, it's important to keep track of our progress, to document what has worked well and take note of areas that need our attention. That's why the annual report from the division's resource management program detailed in this issue is so valuable and will become even more so in years to come.

The gradual buildup of our resource management team – now with a biologist on staff – allows us to make decisions based on science rather than on intuition. Those decisions dictate how we design our parks to balance recreation with the protection of resources. And, they allow us to respond intelligently to issues such as invasive species or development pressure from outside park boundaries. Simply put, the more knowledge we have, the better our decisions stand the test of time.

The effort of our resource management staff is also multiplied many times by the eagerness of our park staffs to do research and tackle tough natural resource problems. They are our eyes and hands in the field, and are most often the ones with opportunity to explain the issues and possible solutions to the visiting public.

Congratulations to the resource management program on another productive year.

Sincerely,  
**Phil**

Philip K. McKnelly

# MOUNT MITCHELL WEBCAM ACTIVATED

The first online webcam and weather station for the Division of Parks and Recreation have been activated at Mount Mitchell State Park. Now, park visitors and enthusiasts can log onto the Mount Mitchell website ([www.ncsparks.net/momi.html](http://www.ncsparks.net/momi.html)) to check the mountain's extreme weather conditions and to view it themselves from a point on the highest peak east of the Mississippi.

With record temperatures reaching -34 F and wind gusts that can blow up to 178 mph, the weather atop Mount Mitchell sometimes prevents visitors from reaching the park and is always a topic for discussion.

The weather station data is updated every 30 minutes and monitors wind speed and direction, humidity, temperature, precipitation, barometric pressure, and ultraviolet radiation.

Although the Mount Mitchell webcam sends an updated image every 10 minutes during daylight hours, that view is often limited due to cloud cover. For this reason, both a current webcam image and an image of the view on a clear day are available online.

The webcam and weather station are mounted on the nature classroom building near the summit, which once housed the park's museum. The view is across Mount Mitchell toward the neighboring Black Mountain peaks Mount Craig and Big Tom.

"Not only the picture but the weather observations will be of interest to people all over the United States," said Jack Bradley, park superintendent.

Bradley said that the park gets as many as 25 requests each day by phone or e-mail for its current weather conditions. And, folks from all walks of life are interested. Some of the inquiries are from locals, and Bradley said that recently a U.S. soldier stationed in Iraq queried the park about its weather.

"We're basically fulfilling a need that is out there," said Bradley. "The webcam and online weather station will greatly expand the website."

The Mount Mitchell homepage receives more hits than any other North Carolina state park homepage, averaging nearly 5,000 hits per month.

"This is yet another way the website can be an education and information tool," said Charlie Peek, division public information officer. "Tom Howard of the south district, - Tamara Ward, the webmaster, and the park staff worked hard on this pilot project, and laid much groundwork for similar projects in the parks."



*WEATHER STATION IS MOUNTED NEAR CLASSROOM.*

The extreme weather conditions on Mount Mitchell required industrial-strength equipment. The weather station was designed by RainWise Inc., a Maine-based company with weather stations from the Swiss Alps to Washington. The software that configures the weather station data is WeatherView32, which boasts clientele such as Boeing Corp., Microsoft, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the National Weather Service, the US Army Corps of Engineers and White Sands Missile Range.

The webcam was purchased from StarDot Technologies of Buena Park, CA. Its clientele includes Yellowstone National Park, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the US Air Force and Carolina Hurricanes Hockey.

The initial project cost of more than \$5,000 was funded by the Carolina Mountain Club in memory of Alan Barton, a longtime club member. Additional funds were donated by Black Mountain Savings and Loan. The Mountain Area Information Network, a local Internet service provider, donated a dial-up Internet account.

The Mount Mitchell State Park maintenance staff, Wade Barnett and Larry Blevins, installed the equipment at no additional cost. Mount Mitchell Ranger Jonathan Griffith and seasonal employee Nick Steiert were also heavily involved in developing the project.

"I want to praise the efforts of all the different people who came together to make this project happen," Bradley said.

The division plans to install its first live webcam at Hammocks Beach State Park later this summer. The webcam will be mounted inside the new visitor's center and will present a view from the mainland across the marsh toward Bear Island.



# NATURAL RESOURCES

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Wehrle's salamander was rediscovered at Hanging Rock State Park. The last time the salamander had been documented in the area was in 1978.

To assist park staff, Seth Lambiase of the division's resource management staff has developed guidelines for natural resource inventories and monitoring. The resource management staff also helps develop monitoring programs for rare species, holds training workshops and is available to assist parks in their research.

Research in state parks is also conducted by outside agencies including students and professors from local universities, and scientists from government agencies.

*WEHRLE'S  
SALAMANDER  
REDISCOVERED  
AT HANGING  
ROCK STATE  
PARK.*



In 2002, 52 permits for research were issued to outside agencies, an increase of 18 percent from 2001, according to the annual report. A diversity of topics was explored, from frog communication to beach nourishment, from live oaks to squirrel movement patterns.

## Active preservation

Resource management is a major component of a ranger's job responsibilities, and the more rangers understand their park's natural resources, the better they can manage state park lands to promote the survival of native species.

While the division generally manages parks by allowing habitats to evolve through natural processes with minimal human interferences, there are areas where intervention is necessary to maintain the ecological integrity of the park, Tingley said.

"It's beyond static preservation," said Tingley. "(Resource management) is an important part of the ranger's job that they do on behalf of the public."

Intervention sometimes involves the use of herbicides to control exotic plant species that are out-competing native species. Intervention can also involve removing feral animals from sensitive habitats. Prescribed burning is one of the most developed and well-documented methods of resource management within the division.

Many state parks have natural communities that are dependent on frequent fire for maintenance and propagation. Without it, the natural communities would be altered so that they no longer support their characteristic native species. The division manages these communities with prescribed burns — controlled fires generally with low-intensity flames that may only reach a few feet high. All park rangers are trained in fire management not just for the resource management portion of their jobs but also to be able to suppress wildfires.

"There are very few parks that don't have an ecological fire component to their natural communities," said Tingley. "Even in the piedmont and mountains there are natural communities that benefit from fire."

Prescribed burns were conducted on 549 acres in 11 state parks last year, up by 22 percent from 2001. One of the most significant burns was on a ridge at Crowders Mountain State Park that contains bear oak, a fire-dependent species. In North Carolina, bear oak grows at only four locations, and all of these locations are on state park property.

Another notable burn was held at Lake Waccamaw where field staff documented a remarkable expansion of Venus flytrap populations following the prescribed fire.

## Balancing act

While on the one hand the division tries to manage natural communities for the preservation of native plants and animals, state parks are also important recreation sites. These two missions must be properly balanced to avoid adverse impacts to the natural and cultural resources of the parks.

Building new recreation facilities follows extensive research that is a collaborative effort among park planners, construction supervisors, field staff and biologists in the resource management program.

Last year, research went into areas planned for a number of capital improvement projects including bridges, a campground expansion and a visitor's center. The resource management program coordinated the research and permitting processes, from initiating an archaeological study at Gorges State Park to working with the US Army Corps of Engineers on designing a 20-acre lake at Pilot Mountain State Park.

In addition to ensuring that developments within the parks have low impact on the natural communities, park rangers and field staff are also

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

# TRAIL VOLUNTEERS HELP AT JORDAN LAKE

By Susan McBean  
Ranger, Jordan Lake SRA

The morning of Saturday, June 7, was rainy, cloudy and dreary. The forecast promised much of the same for the remainder of the day.

I waited in the parking lot at Ebenezer Beach in Jordan Lake State Recreation Area for a group of volunteers from the Triangle Board Club, a local group dedicated to windsurfing and boardsailing in North Carolina. Considering the weather, I did not expect a big turnout and I could not blame them.

But by 8 a.m., the group was filtering in. Seven volunteers appeared, ready and eager to work!

They began work on the Old Oak Trail by spreading a big pile of mulch at the trailhead and continued along the trail performing the necessary routine trail work including cleaning out water bars, removing debris and pruning limbs.

Eventually, they all met where the trail crosses the floodplain and picked up several bags of trash (and a few tires) from the flood debris.

The grand finale of the morning was moving a 12-foot section of an oak log down the trail about 300 yards. A couple of seasonals, another ranger and four of the volunteers grabbed the



*BRIDGE SUPPORT IS CARRIED TO ITS NEW HOME.*

ends of a pair of log tongs. After considerable effort, the eight of us set the log in place where it will be used in bridge construction.

Through the rain, the dirty work and the sore muscles, everyone remained upbeat, motivated and determined to give 100 percent of themselves.

This is the second year Triangle Board Club members have offered their volunteer services at Jordan Lake. Last year, they worked relentlessly for hours to eradicate a section of an invasive stand of bamboo along this same trail.

The Triangle Board Club members have been windsurfing off the point at Ebenezer for many years, and several members have told me that this is one of their favorite places.

In cooperation with the park, the club maintains a “wind talker” on top of the comfort station at Ebenezer Beach. This device measures wind speed and temperature – important information for windsurfers. If you are interested in the current conditions at Jordan Lake, call (919) 387-5969 to connect with the computerized wind talker and get a forecast.

During these summer months, park rangers can be overwhelmed with the volume of visitors we see and the problems we have to deal with. We can also be frustrated with those visitors who don’t seem to appreciate or understand the work that goes into maintaining a clean, safe park.

During these times especially, it is such a pleasure to work with a group of people who do appreciate and enjoy the park, and who feel compelled to give something back. I appreciate the work they have done, as well as the support and encouragement they have given me through their efforts. I look forward to working with the club in future years.

## NATURAL RESOURCES

*CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4*

on the lookout for projects outside the parks that might adversely affect them.

“Due to the relatively small size of the park system, individual parks often act as islands in the greater landscape,” said environmental specialist Brian Strong. “So, many of the influences and pressures on park resources originate from outside the park.”

This year, park staff identified several outside projects that would affect state parks, and the resource management staff worked with the project managers to consider alternative designs that lessen the projects’ impacts on parks.

One example was a bridge replacement across the New River, which connects with New River State Park. The NC Division of Transportation had designed a bridge with a steep slope to the river, which would have prevented canoe access. The division’s efforts resulted in a redesign of the bridge that provided canoe access and was more compatible with the natural and scenic river.



## AWARDS MADE FROM TRUST FUND

Twelve local governments were awarded grants totaling \$1.81 million on July 18 for recreation projects through the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund.

The Parks and Recreation Authority made the awards at a meeting at New River State Park. The amount represents fourth quarter revenues into the fund that are earmarked for local grants.

Since the program began seven years ago, \$46.61 million has been channeled to cities, towns and counties in all areas of the state. There were 50 grant awards this fiscal year totaling \$8.33 million.

The July awards were made to Beech Mountain, Jackson, King, Macon, Newton, North Topsail Beach, Person County, Pinehurst, Raleigh, Rutherfordton, Stallings and Stedman.

The authority approved an allocation of \$135,000 for environmental studies of a potential dredging project at Hammocks Beach State Park. Over the past several years, sand migration into Cow Channel has hampered ferry service to Bear Island at the park.

The studies will examine sand compatibility, submerged aquatic vegetation, fish habitat and the amount of dredging necessary to maintain the channel.

The authority also approved revisions to a list of land acquisition projects for the current year including diverting \$600,000 to the purchase of the "Eno wilderness" tracts at Eno River State Park.

The 815-acre land acquisition would be the largest ever at that state park and an option on the property is due to expire in December. The total project cost is \$6.5 million.

During fiscal 2002-03, the trust fund contributed \$5.39 million to land acquisition projects at state parks.



*TEMPORARY VINYL SIGNS HAVE BEEN ERECTED AT JORDAN LAKE SRA.*

## BILINGUAL SIGNS ERECTED

Bilingual warning signs are being erected at Division of Parks and Recreation swim beaches across the state. Black lettering on the yellow, metal, 24x36" signs reads, "Caution, unprotected area; no lifeguard on duty," in both English and Spanish.

The signs, in part, are in response to two drownings of Hispanic visitors in separate incidents at Jordan Lake State Recreation Area since Memorial Day.

"Here at Falls Lake and Jordan Lake we have a pretty large Hispanic population visiting," said Ron Bowling, the division's safety officer. "So, it makes sense to post the warning signs at these beaches."

And, to be consistent at swimming areas statewide for legal purposes, additional bilingual signs are to be posted in each of the 12 parks and recreation areas that allow swimming without lifeguard supervision, Bowling said.

At about \$40 per sign, 100 signs were purchased from Correction Enterprises with funds from the operations budget. Jerry Howerton, chief of maintenance, oversaw the production process.

Before the metal signs were purchased, temporary bilingual signs, designed and printed by Siobhan O'Neal, exhibits coordinator, were posted at the recreation areas just before the July 4 weekend.

The vinyl, waterproof signs will remain posted over the original English-only warning signs until the metal replacements arrive. O'Neal printed additional 8.5x11" signs that were posted near entrances of the recreation areas.

"We're breaking ground in that we will be probably the first state park system in the Southeast to address the Hispanic population with signage in the swimming areas," said Bowling.

The Spanish interpretation for the signs was determined by Lorraine Galloway, a Spanish instructor at the NC Justice Academy.

There have been other initiatives at the recreation areas to make visits safer for the Hispanic population. Spanish-language brochures on water safety and on natural hazards in the parks have been printed, and many rangers have taken courses in "survival Spanish" to help them respond in emergencies.

# NORTH CAROLINA STATE PARKS MONTHLY ATTENDANCE REPORT 2003

PARK	JUNE 2003	TOTAL YTD JUNE 2003	JUNE 2002	TOTAL YTD JUNE 2002	% CHANGE (2002/2003)	
					JUN	YTD
CAROLINA BEACH	30,684	121,208	31,710	114,699	-3%	6%
CLIFFS OF THE NEUSE	20,379	56,340	24,007	67,525	-15%	-17%
CROWDER'S MOUNTAIN	14,619	96,024	31,894	159,858	-54%	-40%
ENO RIVER	30,929	137,479	32,438	158,719	-5%	-13%
OCCONEECHEE MOUNTAIN	3,864	11,868	3,206	17,455	21%	-32%
FALLS LAKE	105,096	328,971	280,730	652,861	-63%	-50%
FORT FISHER	112,877	376,865	128,400	548,500	-12%	-31%
FORT MACON	193,014	593,026	200,672	654,738	-4%	-9%
GOOSE CREEK	14,396	64,905	13,775	74,754	5%	-13%
GORGES	10,025	34,617	23,529	66,193	-57%	-48%
HAMMOCKS BEACH	21,939	76,074	24,463	91,435	-10%	-17%
HANGING ROCK	52,806	151,980	66,478	191,566	-21%	-21%
JOCKEY'S RIDGE	151,617	498,369	154,907	443,169	-2%	12%
JONES LAKE	17,164	60,814	14,220	47,636	21%	28%
JORDAN LAKE	149,340	306,722	315,832	916,305	-53%	-67%
KERR LAKE	212,380	581,824	249,320	874,328	-15%	-33%
LAKE JAMES	32,750	93,937	40,520	144,550	-19%	-35%
LAKE NORMAN	47,388	162,178	50,565	188,042	-6%	-14%
LAKE WACCAMAW	14,008	50,500	13,716	56,320	2%	-10%
LUMBER RIVER	5,225	23,356	5,894	24,792	-11%	-6%
MEDOC MOUNTAIN	5,693	19,373	12,909	33,344	-56%	-42%
MERCHANT'S MILLPOND	27,842	77,535	9,725	50,731	186%	53%
MORROW MOUNTAIN	37,486	118,198	51,460	232,560	-27%	-49%
MOUNT JEFFERSON	10,488	42,519	9,086	39,816	15%	7%
MOUNT MITCHELL	89,716	188,167	87,477	199,528	3%	-6%
NEW RIVER	21,407	63,294	21,598	71,163	-1%	-11%
PETTIGREW	11,412	53,779	10,405	40,588	10%	32%
PILOT MOUNTAIN	45,891	165,054	46,111	186,279	0%	-11%
RAVEN ROCK	9,476	54,581	11,719	60,682	-19%	-10%
SINGLETARY LAKE	4,668	11,310	4,480	9,321	4%	21%
SOUTH MOUNTAINS	25,052	85,356	17,944	82,342	40%	4%
STONE MOUNTAIN	32,244	111,628	53,956	213,008	-40%	-48%
WEYMOUTH WOODS	2,455	14,668	2,227	15,058	10%	-3%
WILLIAM B. UMSTEAD	45,187	166,371	42,617	210,581	6%	-21%
SYSTEMWIDE TOTAL	1,609,517	4,998,890	2,087,990	6,938,446	-23%	-28%

# Mission

The mission of the North Carolina Division of Parks & Recreation is:

to protect North Carolina's natural diversity;

to provide and promote outdoor recreation opportunities throughout North Carolina;

*and*

to exemplify and encourage good stewardship of North Carolina's natural resources

for all citizens and visitors of North Carolina.

## ***SAFETY ZONE***

### **When You Ride, Make Safety Your Guide**

- ☐ Make sure everyone in your vehicle buckles up. Seatbelts save lives.
- ☐ Be alert; expect other drivers to do the unexpected.
- ☐ Give yourself room to act and react.
- ☐ Do not challenge aggressive drivers.
- ☐ Never drink and drive or ride with a drunk driver.



### *The Steward*

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